

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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R 201040Z MAY 76
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3710

S E C R E T CAIRO 6919

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FOR PM DIRECTOR VEST

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR MPOL MARR MILI EG US
SUBJECT: US NAVAL VISITS TO EGYPT

1. HAVE RECIVED COPY OF MESSAGE (USCINCEUR 171733Z MAY 76) FROM USCINCEUR TO JCS, REPEATED INFO CNO, CINCUSNAVEUR AND COMSIXTHFLT, ALLUDING TO RECENT SIXTH FLEET OPERATIONS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND NOTING ADQUATE PORT FACILITIES NEEDED IN THAT AREA WITH AN ACCEPTABLE REACTION RANGE OF LEBANON. MESSAGE GOES ON TO SUGGEST THAT, "AS A BEGINNIN," SHIP VISITATION PROGRAM TO EGYPT BE EXPANDED TO SIX TIMES A YEAR AND UP TO THREE SHIPS A VISIT. IT ALSO PROPOSES LIMITED USE OF AL-GABBARI SHIPYARD IN ALEXANDRIA. MESSAGE RECOMMENDS JCS URGE STATE APPROVE PROPOSED EXPANDED SHIP VISIT PROGRAM TO EGYPT AND FAVORABLE DECISION RE USE OF AL-GABBARI SHIPYARD.

2. SINCE MESSAGE WAS SENT INFO CAIRO, I HAVE SENT MY VIEWS TO USCINCEUR, WITH COPIES TO OTHER ADDRESSEES, POINTING OUT THAT SUGGESTED EXPANDED NAVAL VISIT PROGRAM IS A PIPE DREAM. WHILE GOE HAS AGREED TO CAREFULLY CONTROLLED QUARTERLY VISITS BY SINGLE SHIPS, I KNOW FROM MY TALKS WITH FAHMY WHEN ARRANGING NEW VISITATION

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PROGRAM THAT GOE IS NOT PREPARED INCREASE ITS VULNERABILITY

PROFILE BY HAVING A MASSIVE US NAVY SHIP VISITATION PROGRAM. I HAVE TOLD FAHMY THAT I WILL CAREFULLY CONTROL QUARTERLY VISITATION PROGRAM, IN COOPERATION WITH GOE, AND I INTEND TO DO JUST THAT. I ALSO REMINDED USCINCEUR THAT, APART FROM SIX C-130S, WE HAVE NO MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR GOE AND EGYPTIAN HOPES ON THIS SCORE HAVE THUS FAR BEEN DASHED. C-130S ARE APPRECIATED, BUT CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO ELICIT EFFUSIVE EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE. WERE A SIZEABLE US MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UNDERWAY EGYPTIANS MIGHT BE WILLING TO LOOK AT AN EXPANDED SHIP VISITATION PROGRAM BUT THIS IS NOT THE CASE NOW. SO FAR AS LIMITED USE OF AL-GABBARI SHIPYARD IS CONCERNED, I REMINDED USCINCEUR THAT THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WASHINGTON MUST STILL DECIDE. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER SHIPYARD MASTER'S INITIAL INVITATION WAS APPROVED AT SENIOR GOE LEVELS. THERE IS LITTLE POINT TO ASKING THE QUESTION BEFORE WE HAVE A WASHINGTON DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT WE ARE INTERESTED. HOPEFULLY MY RESPONSE TO USCINCEUR MESSAGE WILL SCOTCH EXPANDED SHIP VISITATION IDEA. IF IT DOES NOT AND JCS APPROACHES DEPT, RECOMMEND DEPT REITERATE THAT SUCH AN IDEA IS NOT FEASIBLE IN PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION. ON CONTRARY, PROPOSING IT TO GOE NOW COULD WELL JEOPARDIZE EXISTING PERIODIC VISITATION PROGRAM.

3. RE STATE 104243 (IN RESPONSE TO CAIRO 5285), I HAVE DISCUSSED FURTHER WITH NAVATT MATTER OF VISIT OT AL-GABBARI SHIPYARD. HE ADVISES WE ALREADY KNOW A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE YARD AND THAT NEEDED SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION WILL NECESSARILY REQUIRE HIM TO QUESTION SHIPYARD MASTER RE COSTS, TYPE OF ELECTRICAL FACILITIES ETC. ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS ARE SUCH AS TO SUGGEST AN ACTIVE USG INTEREST IN USING THE SHIPYARD. MY CONCEPT HAD BEEN A SIMPLE WALK-THROUGH OF THE YARD BY A PROFESSIONAL NAVAL OFFICER, WHO WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE AN ON-THE-SPOT EVALUATION OF THE UTILITY OF THE YARD. UNTIL SUCH TIME AS A WASHINGTON DECISION HAS BEEN MADE, MY NAVATT AND I HAVE CONCLUDED IT IS ON BALANCE WISER TO DEFER SUCH A VISIT LEST LEADING QUESTIONS WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE ASKED TO MAKE VISIT USEFUL CAUSE EGYPTIANS TO INFER WE INTEND TO

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USE THE YARD.
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